Conſcientious Obedience to GOVERNORS recommended.

193. f. 17.
120

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

The UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,

On TUESDAY *June* 22, 1756.

BEING

The ANNIVERSARY of his MAJESTY's happy Acceſſion to the Throne.

By RICHARD GREEN, D.D. Fellow of St. *John Baptiſt* College, *Oxford*,
Rector of *Belbroughton*, *Worceſterſhire*,
And Chaplain to the Right Reverend the LORD BISHOP of WORCESTER.

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MDCCLVI.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

ROM. xiii. 5.

Wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake.

THAT our gracious Creator deſigned men for as much temporal happineſs, as they are capable of conſiſtently with their eternal intereſt, ſeems evident amongſt other conſiderations from the inexhauſtible variety of good things, with which he has furniſhed this lower place of their abode; and for this end he has formed them for ſociety, and made government neceſſary.

Among beings pure and perfect and impeccable, an equality perhaps might be poſſible, and they might want no other governor than the adorable Sovereign of the univerſe; but this is a bare ſuppoſition. According to the beſt notions, we can form either from reaſon or ſcripture, concerning ſpiritual beings, (of whoſe nature, as it little concerns us, the divine wiſdom hath thought proper to make but ſparing diſcoveries) there ſubſiſts a regular ſubordination among them; and it can ſcarce be doubted, that this economy is neceſſary to all created, intelligent beings. God hath been pleaſed to make man *little lower than the angels* *, and it is more than probable, that the reſemblance between the angelic and the human nature conſiſts in this ſubordination, as well as in the faculty of reaſon, of which it appears to be the natural conſequence; and therefore the merely animal creation (for want of a ſufficient degree of conſciouſneſs) is very little capable of government or ſocial union. But whatever is the caſe of the higher or lower orders of beings, it is plainly neceſſary, that thoſe of an

* Pſal. viii. 5.

intermediate nature, conſiſting of body and ſpirit, and endued with reaſon, appetite, and paſſions, ſhould bind themſelves by rules and laws, entruſt the execution of them to ſome of their fellow creatures, and ſubmit to controul in order to enjoy the common bleſſings of Providence with any tolerable advantage. This they do in a greater or leſs degree in proportion as government is more or leſs perfect. And from this conſtitution of our nature, the divine origin of it is deducible; which accordingly hath always taken place, even amongſt the leaſt improved part of our ſpecies, and where the knowledge of the true God hath been in a great meaſure obſcured; and it is confirmed and eſtabliſhed, and the rights of governors are fully aſcertained by revelation.

Men being thus deſtined for ſocial and civil life, they perceive it by the impulſe of natural inſtinct, or, to ſpeak more properly, the firſt ſpontaneous exertion of reaſon. Hence without doubt, in the earlieſt ages they naturally formed themſelves into ſmall communities, as the authority derived from our firſt parents was branched out and continued to the ſucceeding heads of families; 'till the circumſtances of things made it expedient, or ſuperior force obliged them, to unite into larger bodies, *when the moſt High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he ſeparated the ſons of Adam* *. Hence the power of the whole was lodged in one or more hands, and a ſupreme authority was eſtabliſhed in ſome part of the community.

As it is evident, that God intended government for the good of mankind, the more it conduces to that end, the more conformable it is to the divine Will. But, if we except the caſe of the Jewiſh commonwealth, which was inſtituted for higher than merely civil purpoſes, Providence (for any thing that appears to the contrary) leaves the ſettlement of ſtates and framing laws to human prudence; in which view St. Peter calls all magiſtracy the *ordinance* of *man* †.

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* Deut. xxxii. 8.

† 1 Pet. ii. 13.

However there can be no doubt, but that governments are the peculiar care of Providence. The reaſon of things, the providential diſpenſations viſible in the riſe and progreſs, decay and downfal of empires, and the expreſs declarations of ſcripture prove this truth. If our heavenly Father watches over every individual, inſomuch, *that the very hairs of their head are all numbered* §; how much rather muſt his paternal regard be extended to communities, in whoſe welfare that of individuals is primarily founded? It is therefore his gracious purpoſe, that nations ſhould flouriſh, unleſs when for ſin he cauſes or permits their diſtreſs or deſolation, either by the inſtrumentality of ſecond cauſes, or extraordinary judgments.

Now as the only ſource of human happineſs is the divine favour, God enjoins a ſtrict obedience to his laws, as well for our own ſakes, as becauſe it is right and fit, and abſolutely due. If men in all relations natural and civil, would conſtantly and conſcientiouſly diſcharge their reſpective duties, it would produce a deſirable face of things, and this tranſitory ſtate would be ſufficiently ſafe, comfortable and commodious. As governors and ſubjects conſtitute the eſſence of civil ſociety, their duties are conſequently of the higheſt importance and obligation; and tho' temporary motives may in ſome meaſure influence both to perform their part, yet nothing but a principle of religion is ſufficient to produce this effect certainly, invariably and univerſally.

The text contains the motives of a ſubject's obedience, both prudential and religious. The apoſtle, having ſhewn the divine origin and benefits of government, draws this inference; *wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake.*

I. By wrath is meant all the means, that power gives to compel obedience, and it includes by parity of reaſon, a principle of intereſt.

 1. Tho'

§ Matth. x. 30.

1. Tho' governments may in ſome meaſure ſupport themſelves (and poſſibly have done ſo in ſome inſtances) by terror and awe, which is a very unhappy condition both to rulers and ſubjects, and the eſſence of tyranny and deſpotiſm; yet there is nothing to hinder men, on a ſuppoſition of their being free from the reſtraints of conſcience, from attempting to overturn the government they live under, by force or treachery, whenever they may think it for their advantage, or are moved by ambition, ill-humour, or any irregular paſſion.

2. The motives of intereſt are ſtill leſs efficacious and extenſive. Public emoluments can be enjoyed but by few. If all, who are not with-held by mercenary conſiderations, think themſelves at liberty to diſturb the public tranquillity, the wildeſt confuſion muſt enſue; and ſure ſuch a conduct is as unreaſonable, as it is ungenerous and irreconcileable to a good conſcience.

The apoſtle does not diſallow theſe motives to obedience; they will, they may juſtly have their weight. The ſword of the civil magiſtrate was intended to hang over and terrify the ill-diſpoſed; and governors have a right to avail themſelves of the favours and encouragements, of which they are the diſpenſers. Thoſe, who do not *fear God*, may be induced by preſent rewards and puniſhments to *regard man*; they come in very properly as aids, and co operate with a higher principle. But

II. This is, what the apoſtle intended chiefly to fix our attention upon, as it not only influences the outward act, but extends to the inward diſpoſition of the heart, and produces its effect at all times and in all circumſtances. The welfare of ſociety requires men to correct and regulate ſelf-love, to ſet bounds to the deſire of wealth, power, and pleaſure, and to forego many gratifications. Tho' greater degrees of public good produce greater degrees of happineſs to the generality of individuals, yet the public ſervice may ſeem, or really be, inconſiſtent with ſome mens private and ſeparate intereſts: in ſuch a ſituation, what can make them prefer peace, and order, and juſtice, but a ſenſe of religion?

religion? This is naturally productive of a temper of mind, that rejoices in the general happineſs, and deſires and endeavours to advance it, without regard to partial conſiderations. It makes men contented and eaſy in their reſpective ſtations, and act an inferior part with as much juſtneſs, care and complacency, as a ſuperior: It makes them ſenſible of the beauty of regularity and diſcipline, and pay a willing, ready, and conſcientious obedience to their governors; nor does it ſtop here, but carries them to make a ſacrifice of life and fortune for the public good. Mankind is not ſo depraved, but that religion ſtill preſerves a general influence; it is a ſtanding monitor, and ſecretly and powerfully reſtrains men from running into glaring and repeated enormities: and we may preſume, it will always awe the bulk of mankind in the ſolemn invocation of the divine teſtimony (which is the greateſt ſecurity, that can be taken of men's conſciences) tho' we often ſee an oath too familiarly evaded by groſs or by refined diſtinctions. To ſuch a principle the welfare of ſociety might be truſted, if mens paſſions and preſent temptations did not blind them to their true and final intereſt, and make other and more immediate reſtraints neceſſary for the preſervation of peace and good order amongſt them. We find therefore the fear of God and the honour of the king uſually joined together in ſcripture, to which the wiſe man by a natural connexion, adds a caution againſt an unquiet and turbulent diſpoſition. *My ſon, fear thou the lord and the king, and meddle not with them, that are given to change* †. Our Saviour unites theſe conſiderations, when upon occaſion of a wicked combination to enſnare him, he delivered that weighty command, *render unto Ceſar, the things which are Ceſar's; and unto God the things, which are God's* ‡. And after their Lord's example, St. St. Paul and St. Peter ‖ earneſtly preſs the ſame duty, which is the higheſt and moſt momentous of all others, how much ſoever

† Prov. xxiv. 21. ‡ Matt. xxii. 21. Mar. xii. 17. Lu. xx. 25. ‖ Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13.

ever perſons of a factious ſpirit (than which there cannot be a greater peſt of ſociety) make light of, or overlook it. St. Paul, in the chapter now before us, fully ſets forth the extent of, and all the motives to, this duty.

Let every ſoul, ſays he, *be ſubject to the higher powers*; all inferiors are required to pay obedience to the ſupreme powers of the place, where they reſide, and, as the reaſon of things and St. Peter's expreſs precept ſhew, to all ſubordinate magiſtrates and ſuperiors of every kind, under pain of the divine diſpleaſure. *For there is no power, but of God*; all authority is properly of divine appointment, whether ſupreme or ſubordinate, ſpiritual or temporal, public or domeſtic. *The powers, that be, are ordained of God*; that is, God hath confirmed the governments of the earth in their hands, who in the courſe of his providence have obtained the poſſeſſion of them; the powers, whom we have acknowledged and who protect us, are the only powers, which we have any concern with; and therefore no one can reaſonably doubt where his allegiance is due, or think himſelf at liberty to diſturb eſtabliſhments, according to his own private inclination or affections.

In the ſame univerſal, unlimited manner, the other great duties of life are enjoined. *Children obey your parents in* ALL THINGS §. *Servants obey in* ALL THINGS *your maſters according to the fleſh* ‖; and the ſame apoſtle ſpeaking of another relation, ſays, *as the church is ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo let the wives be to their own huſbands in* EVERY THING ‡.

He proceeds to deter ſubjects from diſobedience by the danger of it. *Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God.* This comprehends every inſtance of irregularity, and all crimes againſt the peace of the community, diſreſpectful behaviour to magiſtrates, abuſe of their characters, miſrepreſentation and raſh cenſure of their actions, unreaſonable obſtruction of their meaſures, faction and ſedition, as well as taking up

§ Col. iii. 20. ‖ Col. iii. 22. ‡ Eph. v. 24.

p arms and open rebellion; *and they, that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* Thoſe who underſtand this word as merely regarding temporal judgment, take it in much too confined a ſenſe, nor does that interpretation prove the ſeveral acts of diſobedience juſt mentioned, to be either leſs criminal in their own nature, or leſs hazardous in their conſequences; for preſent judgment is but a type and forerunner of future: and a moral precept does not bind the conſcience leſs, becauſe it is inforced with a temporary ſanction, which only furniſhes an immediate inducement to the practice of it. An unblameable, inoffenſive deportment is the ſafeſt and wiſeſt courſe, even with regard to thoſe, who look no farther than the preſent life, as appears from the ends of government puniſhing the evil and rewarding the good, which the apoſtle offers next to our conſideration.

St. Paul and St. Peter both ſuppoſe government to anſwer the ends, for which it was inſtituted: but admitting that the commands or laws of it are ſometimes grievous, eſpecially to particular perſons, yet it is over-balanced with ſo many advantages, and ſo much greater evils would generally accrue to the public by reſiſtance, than what are attempted to be removed, that ſubjects are obliged *for conſcience towards God, to endure* very great inconveniencies. In recommending the duty of ſervants to maſters, St. Peter teaches the former to be ſubject *not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward* ‡; and our apoſtle exhorts them *to be obedient — not anſwering again* §. And yet that the duty of ſubjection in the inferior relations admits certain limits, or, in other words, that mere arbitrary will is not binding in conſcience, according to the true meaning of theſe general precepts, I think (whatever may be the judgment of others) very clear: and therefore, that to reſt the meaſures of ſubmiſſion on their true baſis, *commending it to every man's conſcience*, is neceſſary to *ſound doctrine*, and conduces moſt to the honour and ſafety of governors, to whom adulatory

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 18. § Tit. ii. 9.

adulatory doctrines, however ſpecious, are enſnaring and pernicious. In a government eſtabliſhed on the principles of civil and religious liberty, they frequently *gender ſtrifes*, and tend to alienate the minds of men from their allegiance. Such are the principles of our government; the advantages of which, and the duties reſulting from them, are the proper ſubject of the preſent commemoration.

Now from the unlimited manner, in which obedience is injoined to ſervants, children and wives (which is their rule in ordinary caſes, and ſignificative of the temper, they ought to cultivate) they are neither obliged to obey unjuſt, or even highly unreaſonable commands; nor are they reſtrained from oppoſing or ſeeking redreſs for cruel, unnatural, and intolerable uſage: and yet it is true in a moral ſenſe (in which, according to the uſe and analogy of language, theſe precepts, and many others were wiſely deſigned to be underſtood) I ſay, morally ſpeaking, it is indiſputable, that filial piety requires children to obey all the commands, and throw a veil over all the failings and faults of a parent---And ſo of the reſt.---The ſcriptures for the moſt part contain only general rules of acting, but do not deſcend to particular caſes; nor does this derogate from their perfection. It was neither needful, nor expedient to ſpecify exceptions, or natural and moral incapacities, which diſqualify men for the offices of life, ſince the particular occaſion will always ſuggeſt them. Reaſon was beſtowed upon us to be our director, and is one means, by which the divine will is communicated to us; it is therefore injudiciouſly ſet at variance with revelation. Tho' the *deep and ſecret things of God* relating to the divine nature and the redemption of mankind, could only be made known to us by expreſs revelation, yet, in matters of practice, *the ſpirit of man*, or reaſon, tho' a weaker light, *is the candle* or lamp *of the Lord*. All the ſubtilty, with which ſome diſpute againſt reaſon, will never perſuade men, in contradiction to fact and experience, that there are not firſt principles of morality and religion,

gion, as well as of all other knowledge, to which the mind naturally hath recourſe. Nothing is more certain than, that the fitneſs and relations of things are real; that the human mind is qualified to judge of them within its proper ſphere; and that it is immediately conſcious of the rectitude or depravity of actions. Tho' men, *not liking to retain God in their knowledge, ſome time* gave themſelves up to immorality and idolatry, and even juſtified perfidy and cruelty, they were always inexcuſable *. There can hardly be greater proofs of human depravity, and yet it is a melancholy truth, that ſome civilized and chriſtian ſtates (as they would be reckoned) have been not at all inferior to the moſt ſavage people, in avowing and deliberately putting in practice the moſt inhuman maxims. Even the Gentiles, whoſe ignorance ſeemed moſt invincible, were ſo far *a law unto themſelves*, as to render their tranſgreſſions juſtly imputable; *their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs and their thoughts accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another* †. If then we conſider man in his original and fallen ſtate, the uſe of reaſon as a law is apparent, and likewiſe the neceſſity of divine inſtruction (beſides other purpoſes) to confirm the dictates of conſcience, and to renew and enforce authoritatively the law of nature *written in their hearts*; but much obliterated, as we learn from the apoſtle's account ‡, and too fatal experience, by their own wilful corruptions, which will always be found to have a malignant influence on the underſtanding. However the nature and extent of moral duties are ſtill diſcoverable by the aſſiſtance and right uſe of reaſon, tho' a principle of religion only can advance them to the dignity of chriſtian graces. We are therefore left throughout the ſcripture to collect and infer the limitations and reſtrictions of the ſeveral precepts and promiſes contained in it, however abſolutely expreſſed, where they are neceſſarily implied. It is an unconteſted rule in interpreting the ſacred as well as all other writings, that the ſcope of the argument and the ſubject matter of the diſcourſe fix and limit

* Rom. i. † Rom. ii. 14, 15. ‡ Rom. i. Eph. iv.

mit the meaning of the moſt ſeemingly univerſal propoſitions; and if we quit the path of reaſon and common ſenſe, we ſhall deviate into the moſt gloomy enthuſiaſm, and the affairs of life muſt either be at a ſtand, or moſt extravagantly conducted; of this there are many and obvious inſtances.

With regard to the duty of ſubjects, the natural and antecedent rights of men, which are unalienable, are eſſential limitations; nor are the conſtitutional privileges peculiar to particular nations by the law of reaſon and religion leſs inviolable.

1. That the end of government is the public good, and that men were not deſigned to be ſlaves, are firſt and ſelf-evident truths, which point out the meaſures of ſubmiſſion. When protection ceaſes, and government is perverted to the purpoſes of oppreſſion and deſtruction, the end of it is defeated, and ſelf-preſervation, which is the firſt law of nature to ſenſible beings, muſt take place in ſo unfortunate and deſperate a ſtate of affairs. It is not lawful in any caſe to do *evil, that good may come* §; but neceſſary ſelf-defence, tho' a natural, is not a moral evil; for no power can give a right to govern without any obligation to conſult the good of the governed.

The origin of government, as derived from parental authority, is ſo far from countenancing a claim to unlimited power, that it contains an expreſs argument againſt it: neither is there occaſion always to ſuppoſe an explicit, original compact between governors and ſubjects; tho' it muſt have actually exiſted in many caſes, is neceſſarily implied in all, and immediately reſults from the nature and end of civil government, and the mutual obligation, both parties are under, to fulfil the duties of the relation, they ſtand in to each other. It is not diſputed, that, if a ſtate is reduced to extremity by profligate citizens, recourſe may lawfully be had to extraordinary remedies to prevent the ruin, that threatens it. The danger may likewiſe proceed from abuſe of power, and mankind would be hardly dealt with, if in ſuch

§ Rom. iii. 8.

ſuch conjunctures of extraordinary danger the people had no right to interpoſe for the preſervation of the commonweal.

2. The conſtitutional privileges of each nation are likewiſe ſacred: to mention only one inſtance in our own (where the king is ſupreme, but not deſpotic,) the power of making laws, which is the higheſt act of government, was always lodged in a legiſlative body conſiſting of diſtinct members; and therefore for any one ſolely to aſſume the power of diſpenſing with, ſuſpending or enjoining laws, is a ſubverſion of the conſtitution.

But the ill-affected or ambitious may make liberty a pretence for diſturbing their rulers.—It muſt be confeſſed, that all free-agency is liable to miſapplication, but it is not therefore leſs valuable. As truth muſt ever agree with itſelf, ſo all things that are right and fit, muſt be perfectly conſiſtent with each other. If liberty and loyalty are both good in their own nature, and agreeable to the reaſon of things, they can be no more repugnant within their proper limits, than juſtice and mercy, and many demonſtrable truths practical and ſpeculative, which to ſome apprehenſions ſeem not eaſily reconcileable. Conſcience only can ſet bounds to the furious waves of mens paſſions; to this we muſt truſt, whatever principles we adopt; and where it is found, it will produce not only more paſſive, but more active obedience than the higheſt advocates for abſolute power have generally hoſe to practice.

Again, tyrannical governments, it is ſaid, are judgments from heaven, and muſt be ſubmitted to like peſtilence, famine, and other viſitations.—Patience and reſignation under incurable evils are certainly indiſpenſible duties; but this does not ſet aſide the lawfulneſs of remedies, where providence has afforded them.

Thus the caſe ſtands with regard to right; and if we conſider it with regard to fact, it will be hard to find, for what age, country or family, indefeaſible power was intended; no family of this nation ſince the arrival of our Saxon anceſtors can make out a claim to it: and what is naturally impracticable (as

it is for collective bodies paſſively and *perpetually* to give up their lives and fortunes to the diſpoſal of arbitrary will and pleaſure) cannot be the foundation of a right.

The means, by which providence brings about revolutions in ſtates, muſt neceſſarily be by the ſecret guidance of ſecond cauſes, or by the paſſions and devices of men, which may be directed to good or bad ends, and are often unlawful with regard to the actors, and ſubject them to the divine wrath and the condemnation denounced by the apoſtle. God, who by ways unſearchable to us knows how to bring good out of evil without interrupting the liberty of moral agents, has frequently made, what was at firſt the great misfortune of nations, afterwards to produce their greateſt happineſs. But providence more ſignally interpoſes in events conducted with national unanimity, and the concurrence of all orders and eſtates for the preſervation of all, that is valuable and dear to men. As no one caſe perhaps ſince the foundation of the world is, or can be, exactly ſimilar to another, each muſt ſtand or fall by its own intrinſic merit. No eſtabliſhment had ever more evident marks of providential interpoſition in ſurmounting all tyrannous oppoſition, was planned more conformably to all laws divine and human, or had a clearer divine right, than our own.

Chriſtianity then leaves mens temporal rights, as it found them. Our Lord declared, that he came not to be *a judge or a divider over* men *; nor is it the genius of his religion to mould ſtates, or preſcribe forms of government, but to give rules ſuited to all climates and ages. It is no more an enemy to civil, than to religious liberty, tho' it has been repreſented as ſuch to both; and the ill-wiſhers to it are ready to admit every imputation; but it ſtrictly forbids every kind of licentiouſneſs. St. Peter, ſpeaking of ſubjection to governors, enjoins chriſtians to conſider themſelves *as free, and not uſing their liberty for a cloak of maliciouſneſs* †. From the ſeveral paſſages in ſcripture relating to religious freedom, ſome enthuſiaſts took occaſion to throw off all civil

* Luke xii. 14. † 1 Pet. ii. 16.

civil and moral reſtraints. Others with no better foundation from the general precepts of obedience (either thro' flattery, or that they might have a ſhare in the tyranny, which they ſupported, and ſometimes with a better meaning) have maintained the moſt unlimited claims of rulers, allowing ſubjects no remedy under any circumſtances of oppreſſion: but our holy religion and the good of ſociety are no way incompatible; nor do *they* do juſtice or ſervice to it, who repreſent it as tending to eſtabliſh arbitrary power and abſolute monarchies, and fix and perpetuate ſlavery; neither do they act more agreeably to the true ſpirit of the church of England, and the conſtitution of their country: they profeſs to ſee no difference between reſiſting in caſes of extremity for ſelf-defence, and reſiſting in every caſe; and they may too perhaps with the Stoics think all offences equal. People, who run into the extremes of ſlaviſh or licentious principles, charge each other with difficulties, whether with equal reaſon is not material, becauſe extremes are always to be ſuſpected: it is obſervable, that if either ſide are preſſed with conſequences, they are apt to evade or diſclaim them; in this, as in moſt caſes, the truth lies in the medium; and, thank God, we want neither reaſon nor conſcience to find and fix us in it. There is a virtual agreement between men of a right judgment, and they need only explain their ſentiments to perceive it. It is very providential, that the moſt uſeful and practical truths for ordinary occaſions (and as to extraordinary they ſpeak for themſelves) are evident to all capacities. Thus the plaineſt man, if he reflects at all, cannot but ſee the benefit of government, and the obligation, it lays him under, and muſt acknowledge the force of each branch of the apoſtle's argument for obedience.

The vindictive part of the magiſtrate's office is a common benefit to every member of ſociety, and beſides operating upon the diſpoſitions of thoſe, who are actuated by no better principles, ſhould engage all, who have a ſenſe of gratitude, religiouſly to ſupport the authority of government; for without the execution of the

the laws upon evil-doers men could not venture to live together, nor truſt each other; every one muſt be upon his guard againſt all others, they would be reduced to a ſavage or brutal ſtate of war, and their beſt, their only reſource perhaps would be a deſart: and how wretched a condition muſt that be to a being ſo apparently formed for ſociety, that he is almoſt of all animals the leaſt capable of ſubſiſtence or ſelf-defence by his perſonal endowments, and the moſt helpleſs and degenerate without care, culture, and education!

2. The other part of the apoſtle's argument for conſcientious obedience to magiſtrates is founded in the poſitive good, we enjoy by them. The two grand hinges of government are rewards and puniſhments; and there is a ſure way of attaining the former, continues our apoſtle. *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that, which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame.* Now as no government can poſſibly beſtow actual rewards, or even commendations upon all, or the greateſt part of, the worthy and well-deſerving; theſe and the like expreſſions muſt ſignify the general advantages, of which all are partakers. The loweſt member of ſociety, that is not extremely vicious or unfortunate, is provided with infinitely better accommodations, than he could procure in a ſolitary ſtate. To government we owe the neceſſaries, the comforts, and the elegancies of life, the invention and perfecting of arts and ſciences, the advancement of knowledge and improvement in virtue. For tho' vice has always had a conſiderable ſway in powerful and polite kingdoms, and the arts of refinement are too often unhappily made ſubſervient to it; yet this is an abuſe of them contrary to better knowledge, as the duties of life are more ſtudied and underſtood in ſuch places, eſpecially where pure religion is profeſſed. But in ſavage countries, where government is ſtill imperfect, and ignorance prevails, the manners of the people are indecent, brutal, and inhuman, of which we have too many affecting proofs in the barbarity exerciſed on our fellow ſubjects at a diſtance.

To government we owe the mutual participation of the advantages of other men and countries; by it inconveniencies are remedied, bleſſings diffuſed, and we are defended from foreign and domeſtic violence. The protection then, which every man enjoys, that *leads a quiet and peaceable life* *, and the ſecure poſſeſſion of the fruit of his induſtry, are an ample reward to him; and the good name, and reputation, and fair eſteem, which reſult from juſt and honeſt dealing, are his praiſe.

As the beſt things by abuſe become the moſt noxious, it may admit of a queſtion, whether the worſt government or none at all is the greateſt evil. But we are by no means concerned in the deciſion of it, ſince mankind in general are not reduced to ſo hard an alternative. However it is obſervable, that the former is ſo inſupportable to human nature, that it naturally leads to the other, and tyranny and anarchy ſucceed each other by turns; which has been the unhappy lot of that part of the globe, where pure deſpotiſm prevails. But leaving the conſideration of cruel and oppreſſive tyranny (which is in no better ſenſe the power, than the violence of robbers) the eſtabliſhed power of any country *is the miniſter of God for good*, and entitled to all due reſpect and obedience, as both prophets and apoſtles have determined; tho' being left to man's contrivance it muſt partake of the condition of humanity, and may be more or leſs perfect: few are ſo ill conſtituted, as not to put men in a much better ſituation, than that, which is improperly called a ſtate of nature; for ſubordination and ſociety are the natural ſtate of man: but ſuperior advantages are an additional obligation to obedience. An excellent *civil* and *eccleſiaſtical* conſtitution is a happineſs, we enjoy, perhaps beyond compariſon, above other people.

1. Tho' in the vaſt and complex machine of government many nicer movements muſt be imperceptible to common eyes, and may ſeem, or actually be out of order; yet we cannot but perceive,

* 1 Tim. ii. 2.

ceive, that the principal parts are well regulated and contrived to produce public and private happineſs. The mixed form of our government gives conſtitutional vigour to the whole, and in a great meaſure ſecures to us the peculiar advantages, and exempts us from the inconveniencies of other forms. Laws, to which we give our conſent--trials by our equals---independent judges--that ſingular guard and fence of liberty, which prevents the detaining mens perſons on ſtate pretences, and can only be ſuſpended by an act of the legiſlature, when they think it requiſite for the public ſafety--a liberty of ſpeaking and writing accountable only to the laws--are our envied privileges, and ſhew our happineſs not only above thoſe nations, who have loſt, but thoſe likewiſe, who in ſome degree retain their liberty; and we may aſk our fellow ſubjects, who undervalue their own government, whether there is any other, for which they would deſire to exchange it? and poſſibly upon the whole (for we are not to expect perfection in human things) a better conſtitution could not have been contrived, to keep within due bounds the power of the prince on one hand, and liberty of the people on the other.

To which I muſt add the manner of our contributing to its ſupport, as the people's duty in this reſpect makes a neceſſary part of my ſubject. Indeed this is ſo eſſential to the public ſervice and the very being of ſociety, that the law of nature dictates the neceſſity of it, and St. Paul concludes his exhortation with it. *For, for this cauſe pay you tribute alſo; for they are God's miniſters attending continually upon this very thing.* To expect to partake of the benefit, without bearing our proportion of the expence neceſſary for maintaining the dignity of government, and for carrying on its meaſures (which are our own concern) is not only unreaſonable, but chimerical. There is no portion of our ſubſtance ſo advantageouſly diſpoſed of; which ſhould induce us to part with it willingly: but ſince few are ſo diſintereſted, and as it is too natural to deſire the advantages of ſociety, without ſhar-

ing in the burthen of it: the apoſtle rightly conſiders it as a debt, and goes on to enjoin it as ſuch. *Render to all their* dues; *tribute, to whom tribute is* due; *cuſtom, to whom cuſtom.* If we could know, what the exigencies of the ſtate require, it ſhould make us ſupply them without reluctance at leaſt; and it may be worth conſidering, how far we *have* that advantage. In moſt countries the people muſt confide wholly in their governors, as to the quantity of the payment and the application of it: with us both are ſettled on mature deliberation by our repreſentatives. This is what we underſtand by our own conſent; and it is in moſt caſes ſo as delegated to them, even tho' they differ from us in judgment: their intention ſeems to have been, however they may have ſucceeded, to place the neceſſary burthen as equally and equitably as poſſible. If notwithſtanding we hear frequent complaints of numerous taxes and a heavy public debt, they ought in a great meaſure to be aſcribed to a ſeries of unavoidable events, ſuch as the injuſtice of foreign enemies, and treaſons and rebellions at home, which no human prudence could prevent. How far it is practicable by prudential regulations, to increaſe the public revenue with little more inconvenience to the uſeful members of the community, is a conſideration, that does not belong to our province, which only obliges us to inculcate from ſcripture this indiſpenſible branch of the duty of ſubjects: however I am perſuaded, that there is no Briton, who will not readily acquieſce under an additional expence, rather than ſuffer his country to be reduced to the terms of our encroaching adverſaries, the burthen of which, we may hope without preſumption to be able to ſupport as long, as they can; and I may venture to affirm, that our condition is ſtill more flouriſhing, and in conſequence of it our public credit higher, than that of any other nation.

The effects of a mild and free government are viſible in the number, opulence and induſtry of the people, the extenſion of commerce, the improvement of manufactures, and the conſequential increaſe and ſumptuouſneſs of buildings, eſpecially in

the capital and all commercial and induſtrious towns; whoſe riches circulate to remoter parts, and would more, if theſe were made more acceſſible. *We have built goodly houſes and dwelt therein*, according to Moſes's deſcription of national proſperity, *our flocks and our herds multiply, and our ſilver and our gold is multiplied, and all that we have is multiplied* *; and our foundations of charity, and works of magnificence, and public convenience, do honour to the nation: not that it is to be imagined, that we are arrived, or perhaps ever can, at the height of national improvements. Much employment for public ſpirit yet remains, and many obſtacles from prejudice and ſelf-intereſt are to be ſurmounted. Our unhappy diviſions have poſſibly obſtructed many deſigns for the public good; and probably this bad effect will always in ſome degree be the conſequence of the bleſſing of liberty. But tho' we cannot expect, there ſhould be *no complaining in our ſtreets*, we may truly ſay, *happy are the people, that are in ſuch a caſe*, as to external goods; *yea*, infinitely more bleſſed ſtill would our condition be, if *the abundance of all things*, as it in reaſon ought, ſhould impreſs upon us that leſſon, which the great Jewiſh law-giver drew from this conſideration for the inſtruction of God's people, *thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he, that giveth thee power to get wealth* †. But here we muſt reflect with ſhame and remorſe, and ſelf-condemnation, how greatly we have failed.

Tho' I am far from thinking ſo ill of mankind, or of our own age and country, as ſome do, yet, to ſpeak truly of them, there is but too much need of amendment. Men are of a mixed nature, and often inconſiſtent with themſelves; they have generally ſome virtues to atone for and qualify their vices and infirmities, and few, it is to be hoped, are loſt to all principle. But without comparing times, or enquiring, whether there are many or few righteous, every one has a care of his own, and ſhould conſider ſeriouſly, how little in all probability he is advanced in a religious

* Deut. viii. 12. † Ibid. ver. 18.

gious life, and for the public good reform himſelf, as ſin always hath been the deſtruction of ſtates, and always will ſap and ſink their foundation. All, who are juſtly chargeable with the vices, with too much reaſon complained of amongſt us, ſuch as luxury, intemperance, ſenſuality, immoderate love of pleaſure, the ruinous vice of gaming, profanation of oaths, infidelity, and the like works of the fleſh, are in a deplorable and deſperate ſtate with regard to their own ſpiritual concerns, and likewiſe ſo far enemies to their country, and bad ſubjects. Many of theſe are the ungrateful abuſe of that plenty, with which God hath bleſſed us; a vice, to which his choſen people were extremely prone. Jeſhurun *waxed fat and kicked* *. The trueſt inſtance then of the love of our country is, to forſake and diſcourage wickedneſs and to maintain good diſcipline in our reſpective ſtations, whoſe nature it is to incorporate, as it were, and aſſimilate all, who live under it; and then we need not care, how many are admitted to our privileges. We have excellent laws, nothing can contribute ſo much to our happineſs, as a due obſervance of them; without this the purity of our religious eſtabliſhment, which is the other bleſſing, that requires our pious acknowledgment, will avail us little.

2. Beſides the corruptions in doctrine and worſhip inſeparably attached to the ſee of Rome, the tyranny of popery over mens conſciences was a yoke, *which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.* Uncharitableneſs is the characteriſtic of that church, inſomuch that they treat thoſe of their own communion, who diſavow it, as ignorant of the very elements of religion, which requires wholeſome ſeverities in compaſſion to mens ſouls. Whatever regard therefore we may have for individuals of that perſuaſion, who may be better than their principles, can we entertain a favourable opinion of their church? Uncharitableneſs hath of all errors the leaſt pretence to the plea of innocence. No erroneous judgment or miſguided underſtanding can excuſe cruelty and perſecution, which are im-

* Deut. xxxii. 15.

moral and impious practices. There are too many undeniable proofs, that popery hath not changed its nature. Here it may affect to put on a milder appearance, which yet it can hardly preserve. Tho' curbed by restraining laws, which self-preservation hath made necessary, and indulged by the respite of them, it from time to time breaks forth and discovers, *what manner of spirit it is of*; abroad it has never ceased raging. We have been reminded from the imperial seat of that church of the beauty of persecution: may none, who call themselves protestant, ever be captivated with the charms of it. Can it then be justifiable on any supposition to risk our matchless constitution by trusting such a savage nature and giving it a chance to establish itself in time, if not at first? That popery is an essential disqualification for the throne of these kingdoms, is a fundamental part of our constitution, if we are to continue protestant. The freedom from this intolerable servitude, strengthens every motive of obedience to the present government, which like all other duties must be shewn by the inward affection of the mind and a suitable outward demeanour.

1. Every considerate and conscientious person will take care, that his heart accompanies his lips, when he enters into engagements. This is necessary to a man's own peace, makes duty a delight, and gives a benevolent turn to the temper. Our disposition with regard to a cause is rightly expressed by affection or disaffection. Our affections are engaged, before reason comes in. Even virtue and religion have, or should have, the prejudices of education on their side; they are unavoidable in the nature of things, and therefore not blameable. The only inference, we can draw from hence, is, that we ought carefully to try and examine them; and where we find, they have been misplaced (and great allowances should be made for early impressions) it is no disgrace, it is a credit to a man to recede from an error for the sake of a good conscience. We find perhaps from ourselves, at least we acknowledge from the experience, we have of others, that

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men part with them reluctantly, and (tho' when repugnant to duty no very valuable inheritance) look upon them as part of their patrimony. They are favourites nurſed by pride, kept alive by falſe honour and falſe ſhame, and ſupported by multitudes. Now tho' it may require no ſmall degree of courage and diſcernment and good temper to break thro' all theſe, yet it is worth ſome pains to reconcile duty and affection.

2. When theſe are at variance, the mind is in no very eaſy ſituation, and naturally vents itſelf in *bitterneſs and wrath---and clamour —and evil ſpeaking---with all malice* ‡. Nothing can be more undeſireable than a ſtate of perpetual diſ-ſatisfaction and diſcontent, or more illiberal than a habit of railing---for things, which being fixed by Providence are out of man's power—againſt the higheſt and moſt reſpectable characters—perhaps the wiſeſt and beſt of men—at leaſt perſons, whoſe diſpoſitions and deſigns we know nothing of. Such a practice, tho' it does not proceed to direct action, to which however it naturally tends, is ſcarce more innocent or leſs pernicious. Shimei affords a memorable inſtance of this, who, not being able to brook David's advancement by God to the throne of Iſrael to the excluſion of the houſe of Saul, indulged his malevolent diſpoſition in the bittereſt expreſſions, *and curſed, and threw ſtones, and caſt duſt* †. I do not mean to diſcommend a ſober and temperate freedom of ſpeech, or to derogate from the right of private judgment, which is the only criterion in every man's own breaſt, as far as he is a competent and impartial judge, both of private actions and public meaſures; and to oppoſe ſuch of the latter as a perſon thinks wrong in a legal and regular way, and with an intent not to clog, but to aid and facilitate the wheels of good government, is juſt and eſſential to liberty: but lightly to *ſpeak evil of dignities* is a highly criminal practice *reſerved*, we know, *unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed* ‖, and contrary to *pure religion*, which preſcribes a reverence of authority, and a general preſump-

‡ Eph. iv. 31. † 2 Sam. xvi. 5—13. ‖ Jude.

preſumption in favour of governors on account of the uſefulneſs, difficulty and dignity of their office.

The ſeeds of this and every duty are beſt implanted in the early part of life. The firſt occaſions of exerciſing it are towards parents; and towards paſtors and maſters, whom the new teſtament ſpeaks of as one ſort of rulers ‡. It is a happy preſage, when obedience is exerted in theſe domeſtic and private relations. Submiſſion to diſcipline is the ornament and glory of youth, and ſo far from ſervile, that it is a ſign of the moſt free and generous diſpoſition, and will accompany them and give a propriety of behaviour thro' every relation of life. The credit of a place of education like this will in ſome degree be affected by the conduct of thoſe, who receive their inſtruction in it. That a few ſpots ſhould be found in the faireſt body is not very ſurpriſing; it is more ſo, conſidering the nature and end of the inſtitution, and the ſervices derived from it to religion and learning, that it ſhould have any enemies or hard judges. But they are chiefly ſuch, as are no well-wiſhers to either. *They* likewiſe, who by tranſgreſſing the bounds of regularity, ſobriety and good order, give *occaſion* of cenſure *to them, which deſire occaſion*, are ſo far enemies to the univerſity, and in a ſtill greater degree, if they call themſelves friends, and appropriate to themſelves that venerable name, thereby offering a great indignity, where they owe the warmeſt affection, gratitude and filial regard. The exceptionable behaviour even of a ſingle perſon is ſufficient to bring undeſerved imputations on our diſcipline. But nothing of this ſort will adhere, if thoſe, who are placed under it, are diſpoſed to obey in all things their worthy magiſtrates, governors and inſtructors, who are entitled to the utmoſt compliance, reſpect and deference by the apoſtolical injunctions; and who, being highly ſenſible themſelves of, what is due to authothority, (in which they juſtly claim an intereſt) earneſtly deſire, that theſe ſeminaries may produce the moſt illuſtrious examples of

‡ Theſſ. v. 12. Heb. xiii. 17.

of affection to that eſtabliſhment, to which they are indebted for the very being of the church of England, and the preſervation of their rights and privileges; which were once the grand obſtacles to the ſucceſs, and firſt objects of the reſentment, of arbitrary counſels. Since which *perilous time* we have been bleſſed with a ſucceſſion of excellent proteſtant princes, defenders of our truly evangelical church, favourers and benefactors to theſe learned and religious foundations.

Gratitude for theſe particular bleſſings of Providence amongſt others is with reaſon expected of us, and therefore *giving of thanks—for kings and for all, that are in authority* †, is enjoined us as a neceſſary return for the benefits of government. His majeſty's happy acceſſion to the throne of theſe kingdoms, as on this day, is an inſtance of the continued goodneſs of Providence to us. A long and gracious reign hath given us full experience of the perſonal and royal virtues of our ſovereign—his integrity, magnanimity, love of juſtice, and uniform adherence to the laws of the land and the maxims of our conſtitution. I need not in the preſent critical conjucture remind you of any other inſtance of his paternal concern for the public good (which conſtitutes the true princely character) than his unwearied endeavours by preventive meaſures to preſerve, and when they were ineffectual, by more vigourous ones to defend, the undoubted rights of his crown and kingdom. A portion of health and ſtrength beyond moſt of a like age give us reaſonable hopes, that he may long continue to *ſee his childrens children, and* (if it be the divine will) *peace* reſtored *upon Iſrael:* and we may juſtly congratulate our country on the proſpect of the perpetuity of our happineſs from the virtues of his royal deſcendants. Conſidered as a father of a family, he muſt be pronounced fortunate.—Gratitude will not let us forget our obligations to a prince, whoſe bravery preſerved the conſtitution from its rebellious enemies.—Nor were ever the nation's expectations more juſtly raiſed than

† 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

than by the early demonſtrations of the good heart and ſolid judgment of that amiable prince, whoſe worthy natural diſpoſition hath been ſeconded by the higheſt domeſtic advantages; who hath been formed by the example of a father zealous for our conſtitution, whoſe memory will always be eſteemed, and the prudent inſtructions of a virtuous and accompliſhed mother. Theſe conſiderations juſtly endear to us a family, which is the ſtrength and ſupport of the proteſtant cauſe.

The returns of duty, confidence and affection in the people were never more conſpicuous, they having in all trying circumſtances made their ſovereign's cauſe their own, and lately expreſſed a proper reſentment of the indignity offered to him by a reſtleſs and implacable enemy. Prejudices againſt other nations or in favour of our own may eaſily be carried too far. National reflexions ſhould never be indulged beyond the bounds of ſtrict truth. That we have great faults and *have not obeyed, as we ought, the voice of the Lord our God*, I fear, is too notorious. But I hope, we are juſtly in poſſeſſion of, and ſhall preſerve a national character of good faith; a plain proof of which, I think, is, that our neighbours are ſo far from apprehending any danger to their liberties from us, that they look upon us as guardians to them. We may leave the iſſue to the opinion of the world with regard to our antient enemy and rival, whom an inſatiable thirſt after dominion ſeems to have rendered univerſally diſtruſted. They are an active, and we muſt acknowledge a ſagacious and powerful people. It is therefore utterly inconſiſtent with prudence to omit taking all neceſſary precautions for our defence and ſecurity againſt ſuch dangerous and vigilant enemies, tho' I truſt, we ſhall not be in any reſpect unequal to them, if we improve the advantages, that Providence hath put into our hands by a ſeaſonable exertion of our natural and conſtitutional ſtrength. Yet we ought not,—the peaceable ſpirit of our religion will not allow us, to be diſ-inclined to a reconciliation, whenever they ſhall ceaſe *to deal treacherouſly*. The ſword is drawn——God knows,

knows, who may live to ſee it ſheathed! War however juſt and neceſſary is a ſore calamity and tremendous appeal to the dread Sovereign of the univerſe. Tho' we have great reaſon humbly to hope for ſucceſs from the goodneſs of our cauſe, yet for many wiſe reaſons unknown to us, or for the chaſtiſement of our known ſins, the event may poſſibly be unfavourable. But *if the Lord is on our ſide, when men riſe up againſt us, they will not be able to ſwallow us up quick, when their wrath is kindled againſt us.* Therefore all boaſting and preſumption are as unbecoming, as courage and reſolution and ſpirit are ſeaſonable. Such the nation hath ſhewn. We have ſeen a generous ardor run thro' all ranks and orders of men to unite, and aſſociate, and riſk their lives and fortunes in defence of their king and country. Such a teſtimony of public ſpirit and loyalty muſt ſilence diſaffection, if any remains; happy would it be, if from this and every opportunity we would take occaſion to cultivate (as far as human frailty will permit) the amiable ſpirit of unanimity and a reverential regard of authority, the contempt of which, whatever was the caſe of former times, ſeems juſtly laid to the charge of the preſent, and ought for the moſt weighty reaſons to be guarded againſt, ſince the encouragers of it can neither be religious men, nor friends to mankind, nor to liberty. It is a much more *joyful and pleaſant thing to be thankful* for the bleſſings, we enjoy (which are really ineſtimable) under the beſt government and beſt of kings. A lively ſenſe of our duty to God will make us good ſubjects to that government, which affords us every kind of protection. Thus we ſhall diſcharge our part towards promoting univerſally the happineſs of this world, and ſecure to ourſelves the reward of an eternal inheritance in the next. *Whatſoever* therefore *ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men* ‡.

‡ Col. iii. 23.

F I N I S.